

pixel values of pixels in the vicinity of the block boundary are corrected according to the result of the detection of block distortion.

19. (Amended) A block distortion detection apparatus as defined in Claim 17, wherein the reduction of processing is carried out by reducing the number of pixels to be used for detection of block distortion.

20. (Amended) A block distortion detection apparatus as defined in Claim 17, wherein the reduction of the volume of processing is carried out by reducing the number of strength levels of block distortion to be detected.

21. (Amended) A block distortion detection apparatus as defined in Claim 17, wherein the reduction of volume of processing is carried out by executing no detection of block distortion using the motion vector when the resolution is high.

22. (Amended) A block distortion removal apparatus for removing block distortion detected by the block distortion detection apparatus according to Claim 13 comprising:

a block distortion remover for receiving the decoded image signal and the result of block distortion detection, and correcting the pixel values of pixels of the decoded image signal in the vicinity of the boundary, according to the result of block distortion detection.

**Please add the following new claims.**

25. (New) A block distortion detection method as defined in Claim 6, wherein the reduction of the volume of processing is carried out by reducing the number of pixels to be used for detection of block distortion.

26. (New) A block distortion detection method as defined in Claim 6, wherein the reduction of the volume of processing is carried out by reducing the number of strength levels of block distortion to be detected.

27. (New) A block distortion removal method for removing the block distortion which is detected by the block distortion detection method according to Claim 3, wherein the pixel values of pixels in the vicinity of the block boundary are corrected according to the result of the detection of block distortion.

28. (New) A block distortion removal method for removing the block distortion which is detected by the block distortion detection method according to Claim 5, wherein the pixel values of pixels in the vicinity of the block boundary are corrected according to the result of the detection of block distortion.

29. (New) A block distortion removal method for removing the block distortion which is detected by the block distortion detection method according to Claim 6, wherein the pixel values of pixels in the vicinity of the block boundary are corrected according to the result of the detection of block distortion.

30. (New) A block distortion detection apparatus as defined in Claim 18, wherein the reduction of processing is carried out by reducing the number of pixels to be used for detection of block distortion.

31. (New) A block distortion detection apparatus as defined in Claim 18, wherein the reduction of the volume of processing is carried out by reducing the number of strength levels of block distortion to be detected.



pixel values is carried out by using pixel values which are obtained by performing weighted-averaging on the pixels of the decoded image and the filtered pixels, according to the strength of the block distortion.

38. (New) A block distortion removal method as defined in Claim 28, wherein the correction of pixel values is carried out using a filter having different characteristics according to the strength levels of block distortion.

39. (New) A block distortion removal method as defined in Claim 28 wherein, after the pixels in the vicinity of the boundary are subjected to a predetermined filtering, the correction of pixel values is carried out by using pixel values which are obtained by performing weighted-averaging on the pixels of the decoded image and the filtered pixels, according to the strength of the block distortion.

40. (New) A block distortion removal method as defined in Claim 29, wherein the correction of pixel values is carried out using a filter having different characteristics according to the strength levels of block distortion.

41. (New) A block distortion removal method as defined in Claim 29 wherein, after the pixels in the vicinity of the boundary are subjected to a predetermined filtering, the correction of pixel values is carried out by using pixel values which are obtained by performing weighted-averaging on the pixels of the decoded image and the filtered pixels, according to the strength of the block distortion.

42. (New) A block distortion removal apparatus as defined in Claim 33, wherein the correction of pixel values is carried out using a filter having different characteristics according to the strength levels of the block distortion.

43. (New) A block distortion removal apparatus as defined in Claim 33 wherein, after the pixels in the vicinity of the boundary are subjected to a predetermined filtering, the correction of pixel values is carried out using pixel values which are obtained by performing weighted-averaging on the pixels of the decoded image and the filtered pixels, according to the strength of the block distortion.

44. (New) A block distortion removal apparatus as defined in Claim 34, wherein the correction of pixel values is carried out using a filter having different characteristics according to the strength levels of the block distortion.

45. (New) A block distortion removal apparatus as defined in Claim 34 wherein, after the pixels in the vicinity of the boundary are subjected to a predetermined filtering, the correction of pixel values is carried out using pixel values which are obtained by performing weighted-averaging on the pixels of the decoded image and the filtered pixels, according to the strength of the block distortion.

46. (New) A block distortion removal apparatus as defined in Claim 35, wherein the correction of pixel values is carried out using a filter having different characteristics according to the strength levels of the block distortion.

47. (New) A block distortion removal apparatus as defined in Claim 35 wherein, after the pixels in the vicinity of the boundary are subjected to a predetermined filtering, the correction of pixel values is carried out using pixel values which are obtained by performing weighted-averaging on the pixels of the decoded image and the filtered pixels, according to the strength of the block distortion.